

## Dutch Republic No Democracy.

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France (June 1583). The success of Parma finally reduced the confederation to the seven northern provinces, and these provinces ultimately became the Dutch Republic—in reality a number of small republics, each holding fast to its ancient rights and liberties, and bound to the others by the bond of the States-General.

The republic did not, however, constitute a democracy in the modern sense. It was the result of a revolution only in a very limited sense. It snapped the bond that bound it to Spain. It abjured Philip, deposed its hereditary sovereign. This was certainly a revolutionary proceeding. In other respects the States were marked by conservatism. They accomplished, in fact, a conservative revolution on democratic principles. They set forth, indeed, a revolutionary declaration of the rights of man in the prolix preamble to the Act of Abjuration. But they promulgated no constitution based on theory or on democratic logic. They took things as they found them. They changed the sovereign, and ultimately agreed to do without an individual head ; they did not otherwise change their inherited political institutions. They were highly conservative in their clinging to ancient rights and liberties. They did not sweep away—did not construct; they simply accepted the situation which twenty years of struggle had created. They could not even be said to represent the people in the large sense. They did not constitute a democratic assembly. They represented the nobles, knights, cities. It does not appear that the peasants, or the masses of the towns, were present by deputy, except indirectly. The democracy will yet have something to say, or will claim the right of saying, something in the government of the republic. But this lies in the future.

The partisans of Spain and the pope, who cannot or will not see the necessity, the fitness of things, work themselves into a passion in their horror of such treachery to the lawful ruler. It does not occur to them to consider whether this consummation of Philip's government was not the inevitable outcome of twenty years of provocation to hatred and rebellion. In itself it was a sufficient abnormality that a king of Spain, a foreigner, should lord it over a number of provinces which neither nature nor Heaven seemed to have destined to